

Peace is still possible - if international community acts.

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Co-Chairs back Sri Lanka

"We are not neutral in this [war]. We support the government. We have a good relationship with the government." And aid and weapons flow. [NEWS 5](#)

Mild Reproach

A humanitarian crisis in the Northeast and soaring violence, but major backers of the peace process can't condemn Colombo. [NEWS 5](#)

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The international community has never been concerned about the Tamils. [COMMENT 6](#)

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Rock blasted

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HEROES' DAY 2006



LTTE leader Vellupillai Pirapaharan honours fallen LTTE fighters, including Lt. Shankar (large picture), the first Tiger killed in the war

'Sinhala leaders leave us no choice but independence'

EXPRESSING frustration at the intransigence of successive Sinhala regimes towards resolving Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict, Tamil Tiger leader Velupillai Pirapaharan said this week that there was no option for the Tamils but an independent state.

In his annual Heroes' Day statement, Mr. Pirapaharan criti-

cised the deceitful handling of the current Norwegian peace efforts by three successive Sinhala regimes and said President Mahinda Rajapakse has rejected his final call in his Heroes' Day statement last year to find a resolution to the Tamil National question with urgency.

President Rajapakse had

instead intensified the war on the one hand and whilst on the other hand talking about finding a peaceful resolution, he said.

The LTTE leader said that this dual war and peace approach is fundamentally flawed and due to this strategy of the Rajapakse regime, the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) has become

defunct, he said.

"The Rajapakse regime, by openly advocating attacks on our positions, has effectively buried the CFA," he said. "Its attacks have expanded from land to sea and air."

"It is not possible to find a res-

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BALASINGHAM HAS RARE CANCER

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NEWS

No choice ...

Continued from page 1

olution by marginalizing and destroying the freedom movement with which talks must be held to find the resolution. This is political absurdity on the part of the Sinhala leaders."

"Both our liberation movement and our people never preferred war to a peaceful resolution. We have always preferred a peaceful approach to win the political rights of our people. We have never hesitated to follow the peaceful path to win our political rights. That is why we held peace talks, beginning in Thimpu right through to Geneva, on several occasions, at various times, and in many countries," he said.

The LTTE leader said that the present regime, which is denying food and medicine to the people to the extent of starving them, cannot be expected to show compassion and give the Tamil people their political rights.

"The Rajapakse regime is not giving due importance to the peace talks because it has confidence in its military approach," Mr. Pirapaharan said.

"The Sinhala military misjudged our strategic withdrawal from Mavilaru and Sampur."

The Sinhala nation, eternally trapped in the mythical ideology of the Mahavamsa, has failed to think afresh and has left the Tamils with only one option, political independence and statehood, he said.

President Rajapakse, who is visiting India this week, on Tuesday dismissed Mr. Pirapaharan's comments, saying "I have not taken it seriously. Because he has always been saying these things."

President Rajapakse's comments came after belligerent and contradictory responses by Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickramanayaka, government defence spokesman Rumbekwella and government Peace Secretariat chief Palitha Kohana.

President Rajapakse told the CNN-IBN television channel in India that he was ready for direct talks with Mr. Pirapaharan instead of involving 'others' to end an ethnic conflict.

President Rajapakse also attacked Mr. Pirapaharan.

"He has been talking like this from the start. He has been saying these things even though he came for talks. He always wanted to kill people. He has killed more Tamils than Sinhalese. Just count the number and you will know," President Rajapakse said.

Asked what can Sri Lanka do to convince the LTTE leader to return to the negotiating table, the President replied: "I don't know."

"I can talk to him straight. So let us talk," he then said.

"I always tell him 'why do you want others to get involved in Sri Lanka?'" President Rajapakse said, without elaborating how this had been done, but referring to Norwegian facilitators.

"I am taking a political risk by offering to negotiate with

[him]," the president also said, referring to the Sinhalese-nationalist groups supporting him and which are opposed to peace talks and Norway's role.

Reacting to Mr. Pirapaharan's comments earlier, Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickramanayake, who was visiting Vietnam, said: "negotiations will go on."

Norwegian brokered negotiations stalled amid soaring violence after acrimonious and inconclusive talks in Geneva in October.

"There is terrorism and there is negotiations," Prime Minister Wickramanayake said.

"Let the LTTE react in the way they want," he said.

"Terrorism must be stopped by them, not us. We are not terrorists."

"Ultimately the Tamil people must decide whether they accept terrorism or not, not we," he said.

Echoing President Rajapakse,

President Rajapakse: 'I have not taken it seriously. Because he has always been saying these things'

the Premier also said: "I am not aware of what the Tamil leader said so far. I haven't read it. I haven't seen it."

Sri Lankan spokesman on defence matters, minister Keheliya Rambukwella, said President Rajapakse would adhere to the CFA and would continue with the peace process. He also attacked Mr. Pirapaharan.

"Duplicity is all over the speech. Every word, every sentence is duplicity," he said of the LTTE leader's address.

The head for the government's peace secretariat, Palitha Kohona, was the first government official to react Monday to Mr. Pirapaharan's comments.

"I don't have to listen to a terrorist in the jungle," he snapped.

"If they provoke us, we will take appropriate measures to counter that."

He then added: "we have said very clearly we want to solve this problem by negotiations."

Mr. Pirapaharan has called on the world Tamil community to support the Eelam struggle.

"At this historic time when the Tamils are recommencing their journey on the path of freedom, we seek the unwavering support and assistance of the world Tamil community," he said.

"We express our gratitude to the Tamil Nadu people and leaders for voicing their support and ask them to continue their efforts to help us in our freedom struggle. We express our gratitude to the Tamil Diaspora, our displaced brethren living all around the world, for their contribution to our struggle and ask them to maintain their unwavering participation and support."

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NEWS

'We seek the unwavering support and assistance of the Tamil community'

This is the text of the 2006 Heroes' Day address by Vellupillai Pirapaharan, leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

"WE are at a cross roads in our freedom struggle. Our journey has been long and arduous, and crowded with difficult phases. We are facing challenges and unexpected turns that no other freedom movement had to face. Unprecedented in history, we are dealing with war and peace talks at the same time.

Six years have passed since we dedicated ourselves to find a solution to the ethnic conflict through peace talks. In this long time span, has a solution been found to the burning Tamil national question? Was there any visible change in the mindset of the Sinhala leadership that continues to inflict unrelenting cruelty on the Tamil people? Were any of the justifiable requests of the Tamils been fulfilled? Were our people able to find relief from the daily harassment and misery at the hands of the occupying military? Were the daily basic problems of our people resolved? None of these has happened. Instead, death and destruction were heaped on the Tamils who hoped that they would receive justice.

While the countries that preached peace maintain silence without conscience, a great tragedy is unfolding in the Tamil homeland. The Sinhala government has imprisoned the Tamils in their own land after closing its main supply routes. Having removed their freedom by restricting their movement and constrained their lives, it is inflicting great suffering on them. It has split the Tamil homeland, set up military camps, bound it with barbed wire, and has converted it into a site of collective torture.

The Sinhala government has unleashed a two pronged war, military and economic, on our people. Our people are subjected to unprecedented assaults. Arrests, imprisonment, and torture, rape and sexual harassment, murders, disappearance, shelling, aerial bombing, and military offensives are continuing unchecked. At the same time our people are subjected to an inhuman economic embargo on essential items including food and medicine.

Even after the ceasefire, negotiations and the five years of patiently keeping peace, the dividends of peace have not reached our people. Instead our people are faced with unbearable burdens in their daily lives. Thousands of our people have been forced out of their homes and are languishing with disease and hunger in refugee camps. No one should expect that this Sinhala govern-

ment which is denying food and medicine to our people to the extent of starving them would show compassion and give them their political rights.

The monumental growth in knowledge and the resulting global outlook is taking humanity into a new era. Ideas, views and philosophies are changing in tandem with this growth in knowledge and this is resulting in changes in society. Yet, within the Sinhala nation, there is little change in its ideas and philosophies. The Sinhala nation is refusing to broaden its thinking and take a new approach. The Sinhala nation remains misled by the mythical ideology of the Mahavamsa and remains trapped in the chauvinistic sentiments thus created. Unable to free itself from this mindset, it has adopted Sinhala Buddhist chauvinistic notions as its dominant national philosophy. This notion is spread in its schools, universities and even its media. The domination of this Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism is preventing its students, intellectuals, and writers from stepping out of and thinking free from its domination. This, unfortunately, is preventing the Sinhala nation from undertaking a genuine attempt at resolving the Tamil national question in a civilized manner.

While the countries that preached peace maintain silence without conscience, a great tragedy is unfolding in the Tamil homeland

Both our liberation movement and our people never preferred war to a peaceful resolution. We have always preferred a peaceful approach to win the political rights of our people. We have never hesitated to follow the peaceful path to win our political rights. That is why we have tried to hold peace talks beginning in Thimpu right through to Geneva on several occasions, at various times, and in many countries. The current peace efforts, with Norwegian facilitation and with the blessings of the international community, taking place in the capitals of various countries are unique.

This peace journey began on 31st October 2000, when the then Norwegian special envoy Eric Solheim visited Vanni and met us. This peace journey is taking place



Mr. Pirapaharan at an event on Nov 27, 2006 to honour fallen Tamil Tiger fighters. Photo LTTE

in a unique period, under unique historical conditions, in a unique format and on a unique path. It is moving on two fronts, peace talks, on one hand, and a war of occupation by the Sinhala government, on the other.

During the six years when we kept peace, we were sincere in our efforts. Indeed, we initiated the peace efforts. We created a strong foundation for peace efforts by unilaterally declaring a ceasefire. We refrained from putting conditions or time limits for peace talks. We did not undertake these efforts from a position of weakness. We had recaptured the Vanni mainland and the Iyakkachchi-Elephant Pass military complex. We had beaten back the 'Operation Fire' of the Sinhala military. We carried out great military feats in the history of our struggle. It was from this position of strength that we undertook this peace effort.

The situation was just the opposite in the south. The south had faced defeat after defeat and was losing its will to face war. Its military had lost its backbone. The economy was very shaky. It was only under such conditions that the Sinhala nation agreed for peace talks. In this five years since the peace efforts began, three governments have come to power, that of Wickremasinghe, Bandaranayake and Rajapakse. Each time the government changed, the dove of peace moved from one cage to another but it was never able to fly freely. Stabbed many times, the dove is now struggling for its life.

We held talks with the Wickremasinghe government for

six months after signing the Cease Fire Agreement (CFA) with him. Like all previous Sinhala regimes, the Wickremasinghe regime dragged time without implementing the clauses in the CFA and the agreements reached at the talks. Its military failed to move out of people's homes, schools and hospitals

Rajapakse's regime is not giving due importance to the peace talks because it has confidence in its military approach.

and instead declared these vast areas of land as military security zones and permanently prevented the people from returning to their land. The sub-committee for De-escalation and Normalization became dysfunctional. The sub-committee created to solve immediate humanitarian needs of the people also become defunct due to planned sabotage by the government.

The Wickremasinghe government that refused to solve the humanitarian problems facing our people, secretly worked to marginalize our movement on the world stage. Even before setting up a working administrative structure in the Tamil homeland, it conducted donor conferences to obtain aid for the south. By failing to facilitate our participation in the donor conference held in

Washington, it marginalized and humiliated our movement. As a result we were forced to stay away from the Tokyo conference. The Wickremasinghe regime did not stop with this. It plotted to trap our freedom movement in an 'international safety net' and destroy us.

When we put forward the proposal for an Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA), startling changes occurred in the southern politics. The Kumaratunge government took over the reins of power. While refusing to hold talks on the basis of our proposal, her government, using the paramilitary phenomenon, intensified the shadow war against us. The paramilitary factor turned the Tamil homeland into a violent blood stained theatre. Intellectuals, political leaders, journalists, LTTE members, supporters and civilians were all murdered. We were forced to halt the political work, carried out according to the CFA clauses by our members in Sri Lankan military occupied areas of the Tamil homeland. As a result, our people were left alone in the cruel grip of the occupying military. Finally the Kumaratunge regime failed to implement even the Joint Mechanism (PTOMS) agreement signed by her regime for tsunami rehabilitation. The Supreme Court, unable to step outside the Sinhala chauvinistic notions, rejected this purely humanitarian focused agreement citing the unitary constitution.

It was at this time that the Sinhala nation elected Rajapakse

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NEWS

'unwavering support...'

Continued from page 3

as its new President. Like the Sinhala leaders of the past, he too is putting his hopes in a military solution. He rejected our final call in our last year's Heroes' Day statement, to find a resolution to the Tamil National question with urgency. Instead, he intensified the war, on the one hand, with the view to destroy our movement and, on the other hand, he is talking about finding a peaceful resolution. This dual war and peace approach is fundamentally flawed. It is not possible to find a resolution by marginalizing and destroying the freedom movement with which talks must be held to find the resolution. This is political absurdity on the part of the Sinhala leaders.

The Rajapakse regime hopes to decide the fate of the Tamil nation using its military power. It wants to occupy the Tamil land and then force an unacceptable solution on the Tamils. Due to this strategy of the Rajapakse regime, the CFA has become defunct. The Rajapakse regime, by openly advocating attacks on our positions, has effectively buried the CFA. The Rajapakse regime's attacks have expanded from land to sea and air. It has given a free hand to the paramilitary groups to kill at will. It has occupied Mavilaru and Sampur blatantly breaking the terms of the CFA. The Sinhala military misjudged our strategic withdrawal from Mavilaru and Sampur. It used heavy firepower and launched large scale offensives to bring Tamil lands under its control. Tamil land was soaked in blood. It is at this time we decided to give a shock to the Sinhala regime. Our forces conducted a massive counter-offensive on the Sinhala forces that attempted to move from Kilali and Muhamalai. The military sustained heavy losses and was forced to abandon its offensive temporarily. This, however, did not persuade the Sinhala regime to give up its military plans. It continues on its military path.

The Rajapakse regime, while conducting genocide of the Tamils, is portraying our movement which is waging a struggle to save the Tamils from this genocide as a terrorist organization. It has launched a malicious propaganda campaign to defame our movement. Ignoring the unanimous opposition of our people and the objection of the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission (SLMM), the European Union and Canada have yielded to diplomatic pressure from the Sri Lankan government and listed our movement as a terrorist organization. They isolated us as undesirables.

This hasty decision, arrived at without considering the prevailing context, has created serious repercussions. It has gravely disturbed the parity of status and balance of power we held with the Sinhala regime. It encouraged the

hard line stance of the Sinhala regime. It weakened the SLMM and facilitated the war plans of the Sinhala regime. Some countries that proclaim to be helping the peace efforts, have not only failed to condemn the genocidal attacks on our people but are also giving military and financial aid to the Sinhala regime to support its war plans. These are external factors that are encouraging the Rajapakse regime to carry on with its brutal military offensives in the Tamil land with absolute impunity.

The Rajapakse regime is not giving due importance to the peace talks because it has confidence in its military approach. The two Geneva talks were unproductive because of its lack of interest in the peace front. At the first Geneva talks, we placed evidence of military-paramilitary cooperation in the form of documents, statistics and incident reports. Unable to reject the solid

It is not possible to find a resolution by marginalizing and destroying the freedom movement with which talks must be held to find that resolution.

evidence, the Sri Lankan government agreed to implement the CFA clause by removing the paramilitary groups from the Tamil homeland. After this first Geneva talks, there was only one change. State and paramilitary terror in the Tamil homeland escalated.

The second Geneva talks were also a failure. At these talks, we gave priority to the humanitarian issues facing our people and requested that the A9 road be opened and the SLMM be given freedom to function. The Sri Lankan government, putting military advantage ahead of humanitarian concerns, rejected both requests.

The Sinhala government that failed to show mercy to the people affected by a natural disaster is never going to budge on a humanitarian crisis that it planned and created. How could the peace talks move forward when the peace delegation is made up of people who proclaim that they will wage war and hold peace talks at the same time? How can trust be built? How can peace be arrived at like this?

To improve his posturing as a peace dove, President Rajapakse staged a deceptive 'All Party Conference'. The Sinhala leaders have practiced this infamous political tradition of initiating commissions of inquiry, parliamentary select committees, all party conferences, or round tables to procrastinate whenever it is unable to face up to a situation and wants to drag time until atten-

tion is diverted. This is exactly what he is doing now. Rejecting our call to speedily find a resolution to the Tamil national question, he is hiding behind the All Party Conference. For the last ten months, the all party committee is looking for the Tamil question, like searching for a black cat in a dark room.

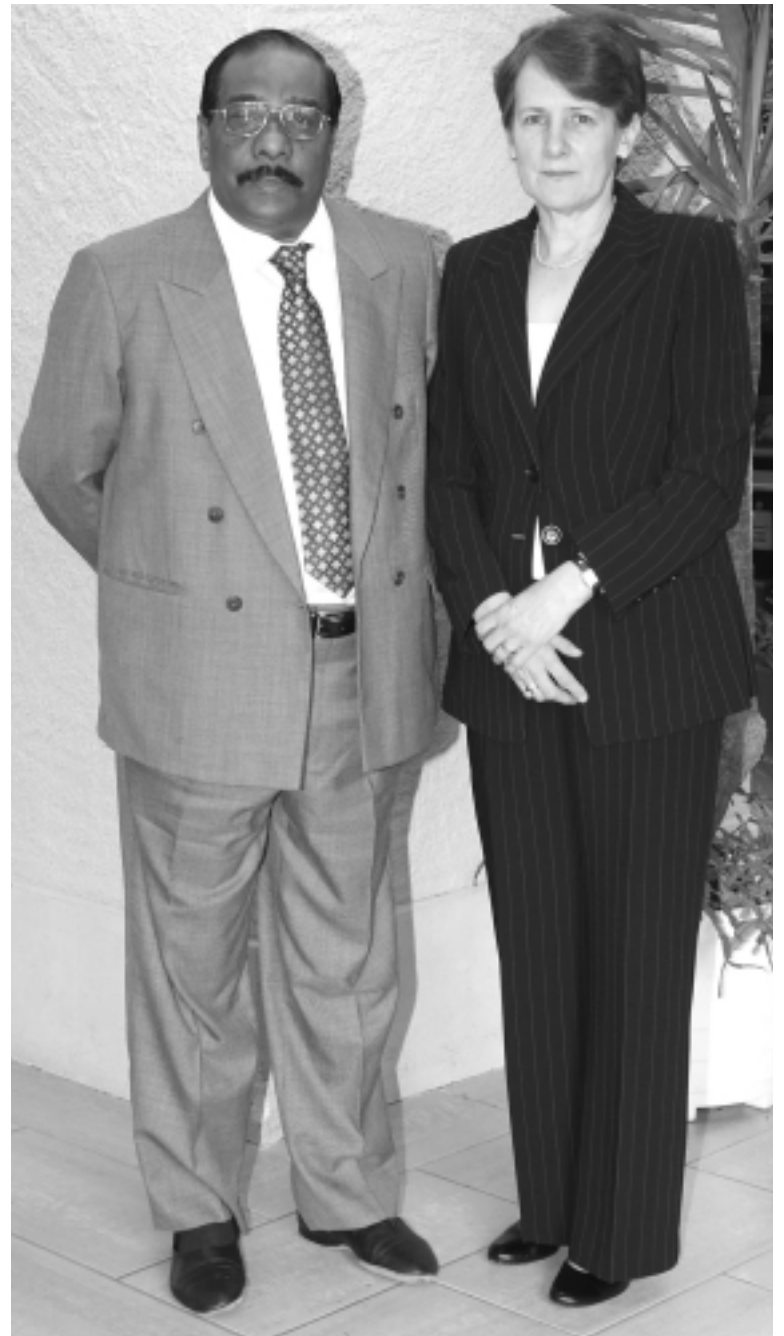
Once the All Party Conference lost its deceptive power, President Rajapakse has taken up his next card, the MoU between the two major parties. These two major parties that effectively have hegemonic control over the south are both essentially chauvinistic parties. Both these parties are born of Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism and compete with each other to carry out genocide of the Tamils. This MoU is a temporary opportunistic move by Rajapakse regime to avoid the multiple problems of international pressure to find a peaceful solution, the declining economic situation, and the opposition of his political partner, Janatha Vimukthi Perumuna (JVP). There is no sincere motive in this MoU agreement. These two parties will never put forward a just solution to the Tamil issue. Despite this, the Rajapakse regime continues to show interest in keeping the all party conference alive simply to deceive the world.

My beloved people,

A long time has elapsed since we embarked on this journey for peace with Norway's facilitation. We have tried our best to take forward this peace effort. We have practised patience. We gave innumerable opportunities for finding peaceful resolution. We postponed our plan to advance our freedom struggle twice to give even more chances to the peace efforts, once when the tsunami disaster struck and again when President Rajapakse was elected.

It is now crystal clear that the Sinhala leaders will never put forward a just resolution to the Tamil national question. Therefore, we are not prepared to place our trust in the impossible and walk along the same old futile path.

The uncompromising stance of Sinhala chauvinism has left us with no other option but an independent state for the people of Tamil Eelam. We therefore ask the international community and the countries of the world that respect justice to recognize our freedom struggle. At this historic time when the Tamils are recommencing their journey on the path of freedom, we seek the unwavering support and assistance of the world Tamil community. We express our gratitude to the Tamil Nadu people and leaders for voicing their support and ask them to continue their efforts to help us in our freedom struggle. We express our gratitude to the Tamil Diaspora, our displaced brethren living all around the world, for their contribution to our struggle and ask them to maintain their unwavering participation and support."



Mr. Anton and Mrs. Adele Balasingham pictured in February 2006 while attending the peace talks in Geneva. Photo LTTE

Balasingham ill with cancer

Veteran LTTE theoretician more saddened by suffering of Tamil people.

TamilNet

MR ANTON BALASINGHAM, theoretician and political advisor of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has been diagnosed with bile duct cancer (cholangiocarcinoma), a rare and aggressive malignancy of the biliary system.

The cancer is in an advanced stage and has spread to his liver, lungs, abdomen and bones, doctors have informed Mr. Balasingham, who is now resting at home, cared for by his wife, Adele.

Mr Balasingham has had various medical investigations and is consulting oncologists about the possibility of treatment and the prognosis.

Commenting on his illness to TamilNet, Mr Balasingham said: "it is an unfortunate personal tragedy. However, when com-

pared to the vast ocean of the collective tragedy faced by my people, my illness is merely a pebble."

"I am deeply sad that I am crippled by this illness, unable to contribute anything substantial towards the alleviation of the immense suffering and oppression of my people," he said.

Mr Balasingham is 68 years old and has been suffering from diabetes for 35 years and in the late nineties developed renal disease, for which he underwent kidney transplantation.

He has been associated with the Tamil liberation struggle for more than 30 years and participated as chief negotiator on behalf of the Liberation Tigers in almost all political negotiations, beginning with the Thimpu talks in 1985.

NEWS

Co-chairs assure Sri Lanka of support

US: 'We are not neutral in this'

THE Sri Lankan government's casual dismissal of international donors' statement last week condemning rights abuses and ceasefire violations by its armed forces stems from confidence that, despite this criticism, military and financial support from the international community is not going to be disrupted.

After a key meeting last Tuesday (Nov 20), the Co-Chairs of the donor community - the United States, Japan, European Union and peace facilitator Norway - said they were alarmed by the rising violence gripping the island.

The quartet condemned "the continued and systematic ceasefire violations by the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE" and "the growing violations of human rights by all sides and the fear that pervades civil society, politics and the media."

The Co-Chairs wanted the "immediate, permanent and unconditional opening of the sea and road routes for humanitarian convoys of essential supplies."

They also singled out the A9 highway which is being held closed by Colombo.

But these messages were contradicted by the strong messages of support for Colombo made by individual representatives of the Co-Chairs soon after the meeting in Washington.

US Under Secretary for Political Affairs R. Nicholas Burns; Norwegian Minister of International Development Erik Solheim, Japanese Special Envoy Yasushi Akashi, and European Commission and European Commission Director General for External Relations Herve Jouanjean addressed the press in Washington Tuesday evening.

"I'd just say on behalf of the

United States that we have faith in the government and faith in the President of Sri Lanka. They do want to make peace," said Mr. Burns.

"We also believe that the Tamil Tigers, the LTTE, is a terrorist group responsible for massive bloodshed in the country and we hold the Tamil Tigers responsible for much of what has gone wrong in the country."

"We are not neutral in this respect," he said. "We support the government. We have a good relationship with the government."

"We believe the government has a right to try to protect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country. The government has a right to protect the stability and security in the country. We meet often with the government at the highest levels and consider the government to be a friend to our country."

"We are working with Sri Lanka as a partner in counterterrorism as well as counterproliferation. All that is happening."

Crucially, the Co-Chairs, who represent the Sri Lanka's donor community said that there would be no curtailment of international aid.

"We have not discussed the future of our [aid] cooperation during these discussions," the EU's Mr. Jouanjean said of the Co-Chairs meeting in Washington.

"[But] together with our [Co-Chair] colleagues we [EU] are a major donor of assistance cooperation, assistance to Sri Lanka, acting both in the framework of the Tokyo Declaration as well as in the normal framework of our development policy.

"The amounts of money are quite huge. So I think the four of us are very active there. We have



US Under Secretary for Political Affairs R. Nicholas Burns (l) with President Mahinda Rajapakse.

not discussed the future of our cooperation during these discussions," he said.

Mr. Burns said: "we do have an assistance program for that government, in fact, a very intensive one and we intend to continue that of course."

And despite peace conditionalities attached to \$4.5 billion pledged by donors who met in Tokyo in 2003, much of the aid had been disbursed anyway, Mr. Akashi said.

"The great bulk of this has already been delivered by the way of pledge to close linkage between the peace process and the assistance process," he said.

Since early 2004, Sri Lanka has seen escalating violence, initially between Army-backed paramilitaries and the LTTE and this year direct confrontations between the military and the LTTE.

Truce monitors say 3,000 civilians, troops and Tigers have been killed while extra-judicial killings and disappearances are soaring.

Unfazed by the criticism set out in the Co-Chairs's formal statement last week, Sri Lanka's government continued air strikes and bombardment against the Liberation Tigers.

Any criticism by the Co-chairs was because the donors had been "mislead" by international truce monitors and a UN envoy, government defense spokesman Keheliya Rambukwella said.

He insisted that national security took precedence over the ceasefire and that the international community recognised this.

"It was rumoured that the co-chairs were going to come down hard on the government," Rambukwella he told AFP. "Nothing of the sort happened."

He also insisted the international community recognised that Sri Lanka had a right to defend itself when attacked by the Tigers.

"As long as the terrorists attack, we will respond," Rambukwella told AFP.

"The co-chairs would have been influenced by Allan Rock and the SLMM (Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission) and that is misleading," government defense spokesman Keheliya Rambukwella told Reuters after the donors issued their damning statement.

"Obviously on the basis of national security, we have to react on certain issues. That can be ... systematic erosion or violation of the ceasefire," he added.

"But this becomes inevitable unless the LTTE change their stance of terror." <http://www.state.gov/p/us/rm/2006/76483.htm>

'Behave' - GoSL, LTTE told in mild reproach

The full text of the statement issued by Norway, the United States, the European Union, and Japan following their November 21, 2006, meeting as Co-Chairs of the Tokyo Donors Conference.

THE Co-Chairs of the Tokyo Donors Conference - Norway, the United States, the European Union, and Japan - met in Washington, D.C. on November 21.

The Co-Chairs view with alarm the rising level of violence in Sri Lanka that has led to significant loss of life and widespread human rights violations. The Co-Chairs condemn the continued and systematic ceasefire violations by Government of Sri Lanka and LTTE. We call on both sides to seize the historic opportunity created by the 2002 Cease-Fire Agreement to resolve the country's conflict peacefully. Only by committing to sustained and subst-

tantive negotiations can the downward spiral of hostilities and human rights violations be reversed.

The Co-Chairs particularly condemn the LTTE for initiating hostilities from heavily populated areas and the Government of Sri Lanka for firing into such vulnerable areas and killing and wounding innocent civilians.

The Co-Chairs call on both sides to respect international humanitarian law and set aside demilitarized zones to protect internally displaced persons.

The Co-Chairs recall the responsibility of both parties to guarantee the security of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission to fully exercise its mandate. The Co-Chairs were disturbed by the incident on November 8 when the Head of Mission of the SLMM came under fire. The Co-Chairs remind the parties of their responsibility to respect all rulings by the SL-

MM and to implement the Cease-fire Agreement fully, including re-opening the A-9 highway.

The Co-Chairs recognize that talks took place on October 28-29 in Geneva. However, we urge the Parties to the conflict to commit to a structured and sustained process of further negotiations without preconditions once a proposal is available, as indicated by the Government and welcomed by the LTTE delegation in Geneva.

The agreement between the Sri Lankan Freedom Party and the opposition United National Party should lead to a credible power-sharing proposal that can help form the basis for a viable negotiated settlement between the Parties. At the same time, the specific arrangements for the north and east should not be disturbed as they are fundamental to continuing the dialogue to achieve an agreement. The legitimate interests and aspirations of all commu-

nities, including the Tamil, Muslim and Sinhala communities must be accommodated as part of a political settlement.

The Co-Chairs welcome the Government of Sri Lanka's progress in establishing a Commission of Inquiry for Human Rights with international observers. They condemn the growing violations of human rights by all sides and the fear that pervades civil society, politics and the media. The Commission of Inquiry and the Government should work promptly to bring the perpetrators to justice and to address the climate of impunity.

Citizens are caught in this conflict and agencies are unable to reach them. We recognize the efforts by government to provide essential supplies themselves and welcome the establishment of the co-consultative committee on humanitarian assistance that is addressing several humanitarian access

issues for international agencies.

The Co-Chairs urge both parties to depoliticize the issue of humanitarian access and for the immediate, permanent and unconditional opening of the sea and road routes for humanitarian convoys of essential supplies. As a first step towards this, the Co-Chairs welcome the readiness of the Government to send one convoy via the A-9 highway to Jaffna and to allow International Non-Governmental Organizations with a proven track record immediate access to uncleared areas to restart their relief work. The Co-Chairs call on the LTTE to cooperate with such initiatives.

The Co-Chairs, together with other members of the international community, express their strong support for Norway's ongoing efforts to facilitate the peace process and the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission's role in monitoring the Cease-Fire Agreement.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

TAMIL GUARDIAN

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Lost Point

Peace is still possible - if the international community will act

The much anticipated annual Heroes Day speech by LTTE leader Vellupillai Pirapaharan has triggered a storm controversy and speculation. Inevitably, his declaration that the uncompromising Sinhala chauvinism permeating Sri Lanka's establishment leaves the Tamils no option but an independent state has been widely interpreted as a 'declaration of war.' This analysis is flawed. Not only does it ignore the prevailing ground reality (that a devastating war is already underway), it ignores the central message: in the four years of ceasefire and peace efforts, the Tamil community has repeatedly been treated with callous disregard and contempt by successive Sri Lankan governments. The possibility of Tamil political aspirations being met by such a political establishment is practically nil, leaving the Tamils no alternative except to seek political independence.

To begin with, a devastating and vicious war is already underway. That this war has largely not affected the Sinhala south does not mean it is not taking place. This year alone, thousands of Tamil civilians have been killed, along with 800 LTTE cadres and many Sri Lankan soldiers. Over two hundred thousand people have been displaced. Over 650,000 people in Jaffna and, especially, in Vaharai are suffering as blockaded food and medicine run out. Sri Lanka's air force and artillery blasts LTTE-controlled territory each day. LTTE artillery responds while there are frequent clashes at sea. Is this not war?

And this war actually began in 2004, when the Kumaratunge regime escalated its murderous paramilitary campaign against the LTTE and, especially, its civilian supporters. Tamil protests were simply ignored by the international community. The confrontations are now between the uniformed armed forces of both sides.

But it is the nature of the Sri Lankan state's campaign that says it all. The humanitarian crisis engulfing the Tamil people has been deliberately engineered. The mass displacements, the blockades on food and medicine, the targeting of refugee centers and other civilian sites - frequently with horrific casualties, are all premeditated steps to crush Tamil defiance. The question Mr. Pirapaharan posed on Monday is this: Is a Sinhala political establishment which is prepared to do this likely to agree to an amicable powersharing agreement with the Tamils?

Just as it used the suffering of Tamil civilians against the LTTE during the times of war, the Sinhala establishment has done so in times of peace also. The 'dividends of peace' which flooded the south were deliberately denied to the north. Rehabilitation and reconstruction aid was made conditional on the shortening of Tamil political goals. Even when the LTTE agreed to explore federalism, the aid did not come - whilst the south thrived. Despite the Northeast bearing the brunt of the 2004 tsunami, it had to struggle to get Colombo's attention. Despite the P-TOMS being signed in 2005, it was promptly discarded by the Kumaratunga regime - and no aid came.

Despite their individual and political differences, all three Sinhala leaders - Ranil Wickremesinghe, Chandrika Kumaratunga and Mahinda Rajapakse - used Tamil suffering as political leverage against the LTTE. All three abrogated deals with the Tamils (SIHRN, PTOMS, Northeast merger) and all three oversaw violations of the ceasefire (from sinking ships to the 'shadow war').

And all this amid a peace process - an internationally brokered and monitored one, at that. The international community has proved unwilling to ensure Sri Lanka honours even international humanitarian law, let alone the micro-deals it has struck with the Tamils. India's impotence over the abrogation of the 1987 Northeast merger says it all. On what basis are the Tamils expected to sign a peace deal with the Sinhala establishment?

This is not to say the peace process, like the CFA, is beyond salvage. As the international monitors of the SLMM formally ascertained this week, the LTTE is still committed to the 2002 CFA - something the Rajapakse regime could not bring itself to say at the Geneva talks.

But to be revived there have to be concrete changes in the dynamics of the peace process. In short, peace will be possible only if the Sri Lankan state can be held to its pledges. That responsibility lies with the international community, especially Sri Lanka's many donors and military allies.

If the Norwegian peace process is to have any prospect of progressing, there must be a tangible reining of the state. It should now be very clear to the international community that staunchly backing the Sri Lankan state is not going to deter a war, it is going to fuel it instead.

Ugly Reality

The international community is simply not interested in the Tamils' suffering.

Jana Nayagam
Tamil Guardian

SINCE the beginning of Sri Lanka's latest peace process, the doves and the hawks within the Tamil community have been engaged in intense debate on its merits and pitfalls.

The doves contended that the peace process was an inevitable engagement between the Tamils' representatives and the Sri Lankan state.

Unlike past diplomatic engagements, this one, they argued, was more likely to succeed as a result of the support of the international community.

The hawks, for their part, were sceptical of the interests of the various foreign powers and more importantly of their track record of involvement in the island's violent affairs.

The hawks, it seems, have been proven right.

In their much awaited statement this week the self-styled Co-chairs of the Sri Lankan peace process - the United States, Norway, the European Union and Japan - delivered a muted condemnation of the recent violence - orchestrated largely by the Sri Lankan state.

Most importantly, they made it bluntly clear that there would be no tangible measures take to curb the state's aggression.

Many observers of the situation in Sri Lanka, including the rapidly shrinking population of Tamil doves, have been taken aback at how mild the Co-Chairs' latest statement was.

However, the Sri Lankan government was evidently not anticipating any backlash from the Co-chairs.

The state was unleashing unprovoked bombing raids on LTTE-held territory even as the two days of deliberations in Washington were taking place.

The post-conference comments by the individual representatives of the Co-Chairs revealed much more than their feeble joint statement.

The US and Japan have been unapologetic backers of the Sri Lankan state for several decades, even through some of the worst acts of collective violence against the Tamil minority.

Mr. Nicholas Burns, the US representative, reiterated for the second time in a month punctuated by mass killings of Tamil civilians that Sri Lanka was a staunch ally of his country and that Colombo would continue to receive Washington's unreserved support.

A little more surprising was the EU's acknowledgement that it would continue its financial assistance despite Colombo's

disregard for the peace process and ceasefire agreement.

The EU, lest we forget, indignantly banned the LTTE in May 2006, the same month the Sri Lankan armed forces began their now six month old onslaught against the LTTE and the Tamils.

There was little evidence this week, moreover, that the EU was any more uncomfortable than the US in backing the Sri Lankan state amid its violence.

Another myth that was dispelled this week was the notion that the Norwegian peace process was being underpinned by aid conditionalities whereby the Sri Lankan state would need to make political compromises with the Tamils.

Mr. Yasushi Akashi, Japan's representative, declared that most of the \$ 4.5 billion of aid pledged to Sri Lanka in Tokyo in 2003 conditional upon progress in the peace talks, had already been delivered to the state.

This is despite Sri Lanka's failure to deliver on a single agreement reached in the peace process - including the Ceasefire Agreement.

During the same period the Tamils' representatives, the LTTE, were proscribed as part of a coordinated effort to pressure the movement into making concessions during the peace process. Apart from the EU, Canada banned the LTTE this year.

In December 2002 the LTTE said it would explore a federal solution. Since then the LTTE has not publicly asserted the Tamil demand for independence.

In 2003 it also put forward proposals for negotiations on an interim administration - maximalist proposals, yes, but meant for discussion.

These concessions were not reciprocated by the state, whose present position is, just as it has been for much of the conflict, that only a unitary solution will suffice.

The most telling aspect of recent international involvement in Sri Lanka has been the carte blanche offered to the state to continue its violence.

And this is after state terrorism in the island had already reached levels last witnessed during the height of the 'war for peace'.

State violence against the Tamils ranges from collective deprivations through blockades of food and medicine on large swathes of the Tamil areas to a systematic campaign of execution and disappearances of Tamil aid workers, journalists,

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Sri Lanka
calls for talks

and elected politicians who are sympathetic to the cause of self-determination.

With hindsight, Norway's peace process appears to be little more than an elaborate effort to curb Tamil political ambitions which had begun gaining momentum through the LTTE's armed struggle.

Almost every element of the peace process appears to have been stacked against the Tamils.

Even the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission (SLMM), in its official accounting of violence since 2002 has been less than even-handed.

The SLMM rules that most violations were carried out by the LTTE.

But there is no accounting for the six hundred thousand Tamils being starved in Jaffna each day - or the 40,000 being bombed in Vahari.

The many accusations of child recruitment against the LTTE remain as violations even when the teenagers are released. But the hundreds of thousands of Tamils unable to return to homes occupied by the military, or resume their fishing and farming livelihoods are not even logged.

For its part the Sri Lankan state is content that given the status quo continues, it will be able to crush the Tamil problem through a multifaceted campaign of violence.

The massive military and financial support it is receiving from the international community has allowed it to increase military spending by 30% this year.

Commenting on the Indian

assistance reportedly not forthcoming, President Mahinda Rajapakse confidently asserted that he doesn't need anything more from Delhi: the present economic ties and support from India would be more than adequate for Sri Lanka to sustain its present military initiatives.

The Tamil doves have clearly been wrong.

At the outset they thought the LTTE had mistakenly been included in the 'war on terror.'

They contended that if the Tamils could demonstrate to the international community that the situation in Sri Lanka is a case of ethnic oppression, then the world would pressure the state to end its tyranny.

However, this calculation is incongruent with the widespread support the Sri Lankan state was enjoying prior during its 'war for peace' - and that was prior to the international 'war-on-terror' which began in 2001.

The Tamil people endured the collective punishments of embargo and blockade throughout the 1990s - during which period the international community was determinedly backing the Sri Lankan state.

The reality is that Sri Lanka is no more an ally in the 'war on terror' than it was an ally in the war against communism in the 1980s.

The international community has always known that the war is between the Sinhala-dominated state and the persecuted Tamil minority. The language used suited the era, but the reality was always understood.

But the optimism triggered

amongst the Tamils when the same international actors which had backed a war against them suddenly began backing a peace process lent weight to the doves and marginalized the hawks.

The prevailing understanding was that the international community was simply uninformed as to the realities of Sri Lankan state oppression.

Enormous effort has thus gone into engaging with the international community, into explaining the history of oppression, into appealing for support for a just and equitable solution.

It was a monumental waste of time and effort.

The logic of the international community is thus much more understandable in the aftermath of the Norwegian peace process.

The major actors have frequent briefings on developments on the ground and have an intimate knowledge of daily events. They are briefed by the various political, humanitarian and military actors.

The Tamils need to come to terms with the fact that the international community is in fact extremely well informed and always has been. It is simply not interested in their difficulties.

The international community is primarily concerned with pursuing its own interests and to that end will be actively complicit in Sri Lanka's genocidal efforts, if necessary.

The Tamils should not be surprised at the present turn of events.

Morality has no place in such calculations. The invasion of Iraq

was about destroying Saddam's threatening regime, not about freedom for Iraqis. The world coolly watched the genocide in Rwanda for months. And justice is being served there only because the Tutsis won.

The Tamils need to take note. History is written by victors - it is perhaps this very logic that drives the international community's immoral approach to Sri Lanka. Throughout the conflict there has been a direct correlation between international confidence that the LTTE could be defeated and the level of international support rendered to the state's indiscriminate and vicious war effort.

And the Norwegian peace process was ultimately about a space to rebuild Sri Lanka's shattered economy and battered military. The international community, perhaps satisfied that the peace process has achieved these objectives, is now openly demonstrating its contempt for Tamils' 'legitimate' grievances.

But perhaps, the point which has, in turn, eluded the international community, is that the peace process was also an exercise for the Tamils in studying the motivations of the international community.

The eternal debate between the doves and the hawks over the intentions of foreign powers has now concluded. The Tamils, in the island and the Diaspora, have conclusively proven to themselves that their fate rests solely in their own hands.

In short, strength inspires respect, weakness invites contempt. And violence.

We
must
unite

The Tamils must find their own way out of this crisis.

Priya Raj
Tamil Guardian

THE FIRST cases of death from starvation have been reported from the Jaffna peninsula. Stark reality is staring us in the face. This is not happening in some distant land. It is on our doorstep, in our homeland.

Since the closure of A9 highway, the Jaffna peninsula has been cut off from the rest of the island. And that was in August.

A humanitarian catastrophe has since broken. Large numbers of people are starving. A shortage of medical supplies and doctors has worsened matters.

The same thing is happening in the east. Tens of thousands are being starved in Vaharai.

Food and medicine is being blocked as artillery and airstrikes pound the region where 40,000 people who fled the military's offensives in Trincomalee have sought shelter.

International aid agencies are being prevented from going in, wounded civilians are not being allowed out.

All this can happen because the victims are Tamils.

The refusal of the Sri Lankan government to open the A9 highway and access routes to Vaharai so as to alleviate the urgent needs of the people has unmistakably demonstrated that it doesn't care about the welfare of the Tamil people at all.

The Colombo government's preparedness to starve an entire community as a way to win the war reveals its true nature. Food is a weapon of war.

Meanwhile, the military and its sponsored paramilitaries have gone on a killing spree amongst Tamils in government-controlled areas. Anyone can be arrested or shot. Abductions, executions, torture, even rape, is reported from every area.

Unimaginable terror is gripping the Jaffna peninsula and Army-controlled parts of the east. Fear underlines the daily struggle for survival: "will it be starvation or a bullet that will claim my life?"

Yet the atrocities by the government of Sri Lanka against those it claims as its citizens have failed to stir the hearts of the donor states, the rest of the international community or even India.

The most they are prepared to

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NEWS

India wants Northeast merger to be upheld

INDIA has again called upon President Mahinda Rajapakse to honour the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement and give legal force to the Northeast merger, The Sunday Leader newspaper reported this week.

Even before the Supreme Court's ruling in October that the merger of the North and East in 1987 was 'null, void and illegal', Delhi had already expressed its opposition to the move, a view echoed by the Co-Chairs - US, EU, Japan and Norway - last week.

The latest request by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was communicated to Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse by Indian External Affairs Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon last Thursday at Temple Trees their one to one meeting.

The Sunday Leader learns Mr. Menon had told the President the Indo-Lanka Agreement was a bilateral agreement between two sovereign countries subject to international law and therefore cannot be vitiated through a reference to domestic law.

Informed sources told the paper the President was also told by Mr. Menon that the merger was a consequence of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement that was aimed at providing for the political aspirations of the Tamil speaking people and not the Tamil Tigers.

The paper has learnt that Prime Minister Singh will personally inform President Rajapakse of India's position on the merger when the duo meets this week in New Delhi.

In their statement last week, the Co-Chairs reiterated their vi-

ew stated in September that the present arrangements of the Northeast should not be disturbed.

The main southern parties should to produce a credible power-sharing proposal that can help form the basis for a viable negotiated settlement, the Co-Chairs said.

"At the same time, the specific arrangements for the north and east should not be disturbed as they are fundamental to continuing the dialogue to achieve an agreement.

President Rajapakse told a Tamil National Alliance (TNA) parliamentary delegation two weeks ago that he was unhappy with the Supreme Court decision to demerge the provinces and would take remedial steps.

The President had also reiterated this position with Mr. Menon, it is learnt, The Sunday Leader said.

Meanwhile main opposition United National Party (UNP) leader Ranil Wickremesinghe informed the Mr. Menon on Thursday that his party stands ready to support any legislation introduced by the Rajapakse government to give legal effect to the merger in terms of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement.

The ultra-Sinhala nationalist Janatha Vimukthi Perumana (JVP) has threatened to withdraw its support to the government if legislation is introduced to give legal force to the merger.

Parliamentarians from the JVP, which campaigned strongly for Rajapakse during last year's Presidential elections, filed the petition in the Supreme Court against the 1987 merger.



More gunboats like this Dvora are being sought, along with new jet bombers and more weapons.

Sri Lanka expands military in 'marked shift'

New dollar bond to help finance massive spending increase.

SRI LANKA is preparing for an onslaught against the Liberation Tigers, raising defence spending by 45% to \$1.29 bln and calling on the international community to help fight terrorism.

And amid analysts' doubts about foreign exchange, Sri Lanka announced a new dollar bond to be launched next year.

Two weeks ago Sri Lanka's military chief, Air Chief Marshal G.D. Perera, told top defense and military officials from 23 countries that his government needs "a lot of assistance" in handling the "terrorist issue."

Meanwhile defence spokesman and cabinet minister Keheloya Rambukwella said: "right

now the requirement of strengthening the air force, navy and defence sector becomes very paramount. National security comes first."

Perera was speaking at a gathering on Nov 15 of top defense and military officials from 23 countries including

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Singh: 'Civilian deaths of utmost concern and sorrow'

INDIAN Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh has written to Mr. Vaiko, the General Secretary of the MDMK in Tamil Nadu, sharing his concerns about the Sri Lankan government's closure of A-9 highway and deaths of many innocent Tamil civilians, saying it was a matter of "utmost concern and sorrow."

The full text of the letter follows:
Dear Shri Vaikoji,

The latest incidents in Sri Lanka leading to the loss of many innocent lives, mainly Tamils including women and children, are a matter of the utmost concern and sorrow to all of us. We have consistently pointed out that there is no justification for violence of this kind and that the killing of innocent people, especially of women and children, is not acceptable.

We are taking up with the Government of Sri Lanka, at the appropriate level, the recent cases of civilian casualties, as well as the killing of innocent Tamils.

We will reiterate to the Government of Sri Lanka that they must find a political solution through negotiations that would meet the genuine and legitimate rights of the Tamils, rather than adopt tactics that lead to the death of innocent people.

I am aware that the Geneva talks in October between the representatives of the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE had collapsed. This has possibly hardened attitudes on both sides. We consider this unfortunate, and it is possible that the recent violent incidents are an outcome of this.

We share your concerns about the closure of Highway A-9 leading to acute scarcity of food stuff and essential supplies in Jaffna and its environs.

Taking note of the acute scarcity of essential items in the Northern and Eastern parts of Sri Lanka, we have dispatched substantial quantities of rice, sugar and milk powder by way of humanitarian assistance. This may not be sufficient I agree, but

I understand that the Sri Lankan authorities are meantime trying to supply Jaffna by the sea route.

We are fully alive to the sensitivities prevailing in the North and East of Sri Lanka, and the plight of the Tamils as also Muslims in these areas. You are aware that we have taken great care not to provide Sri Lanka with lethal offensive items of military hardware, specially of the kind that could be used against the Tamil population.

We have, at the same time and at every opportunity, also impressed upon the Sri Lankan Government to respect the rights and privileges of the Tamils of Sri Lanka as citizens of the country. This is again being conveyed to Sri Lankan authorities.

You may rest assured that we would do everything that we can to ensure diplomatically, and otherwise, that the loss of innocent lives does not take place.

With regards,
Yours sincerely,
Manmohan Singh



President Mahinda Rajapakse with Shiv Shankar Menon (r). Photo Daily Mirror

NEWS



Jaffna crowds defy military to throng Raviraj funeral

THE entire Jaffna peninsula came to a standstill on Nov 15 as the funeral procession of murdered Tamil MP Nadarajah Raviraj paraded through the streets of Chavakachcheri to the cremation grounds located in the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) High Security Zone.

Mr. Raviraj, a member of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) and a human rights lawyer, was shot at close range by unidentified gunman on Nov. 10.

The TNA, Sri Lanka's largest Tamil party, and the country's main opposition blamed the military for the assassination saying the killing was intended to terrorise and silence criticism of President Mahinda Rajapakse's rightwing administration.

SLA soldiers arrested and interrogated Colombo journalists representing Sinhala, Tamil and English media covering the funeral.

The journalists, released after one and a half hour interrogation and threats at the Chavakachcheri SLA camp, were instructed not to publish stories on the funeral.

Participants in the funeral were video filmed by troop amongst

whom were men with faces masked in black cloth, believed to be Tamil paramilitary cadres operating with the Army.

Journalists taking photographs of the funeral events at various parts of the Chavakachcheri town were also arrested by the SLA claiming security sensitive locations were being filmed.

The remains of Mr. Raviraj, set alight by his 12 year old only son according to Saivite rites, was cremated around 1:00 p.m on the Kannaady Petty cremation ground located south of Chavakachcheri in the High Security Zone (HSZ) along the Kearithivu-Sanuputti road in Chavakachcheri.

Despite the threatening presence of heavily deployed SLA troops, the five thousand strong funeral mourners consisting a wide spectrum of the society of Jaffna district, took part in the rituals which began around 7:00 a.m. at Mr. Raviraj's residence, in an emotionally charged atmosphere.

People from all walks of life including University students, Professors, politicians, Hindu

Christian Muslim religious dignitaries, Judges, lawyers, government and private officials, representatives of Non-governmental organisations and others attended the funeral.

Several prominent personalities eulogized Raviraj's unique efforts to bring peace and good will among the people of the Tamil, Sinhala and Muslim ethnic groups in Sri Lanka.

At about the same time as the funeral in Jaffna, a remembrance event was held in Kilinochchi attended by senior officials from the LTTE's Political Wing.

Mr. S.P. Thamilchelvan, the Political Head of LTTE, Ms. S. Thamilini, the head of the LTTE's women political wing and Mr. C. Ilamparithi, the political head in Jaffna, garlanded a photograph of Mr. Raviraj.

Soon after he was assassinated, the Tamil Tigers conferred their highest civilian honour on Mr. Raviraj, praising "his clarity and level of consciousness about the freedom struggle born by observing the tragic living conditions of the Tamil people."



(from top, left) The remains of Mr. Nadarajah Raviraj, TNA MP, were set alight in Chavakachcheri on Nov 15 by his 12 year old only son according to Saivite rites; Mr. S.P. Thamilchelvan, the Political Head of LTTE, garlands a portrait of Mr. Raviraj at remembrance event the same day in Kilinochchi; Jaffna residents walk to the Kannaady Petty cremation grounds. Photos TamilNet



Tamil Eelam Police Chief, B. Nadesan greets British Envoy, Paul Murphy as LTTE Political Head S. P. Tamilselvan watches.

British envoy meets LTTE

PEACE talks can succeed only if "everything is on the table and there is respect for all points of view," Britain's former Northern Ireland Minister said after meeting Tamil Tiger officials.

Saying there is a "huge comparison" between the conflicts in Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka, Mr. Murphy said "no one can win this kind of war."

"We have the same message for the Sri Lankan government as the LTTE: keep searching for a solution, ensure the ceasefire agreement is one of integrity, renounce violence and ensure there is a proper look at everything that can bring peace."

Mr. Murphy the former Northern Ireland Minister, is present-

y Chairman of the British Intelligence and Security Committee.

He spoke to reporters on Nov. 16 after meeting the head of the LTTE's Political Wing, Mr. S. P. Tamilselvan at the LTTE's Political Headquarters in Kilinochchi.

'a huge comparison between Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka'

"I was asked to come by the Prime Minister of Britain to give our experiences in Northern Ireland where I was Secretary of State for many years to see if people in Sri Lanka can learn from our experiences," Mr. Murphy said.

"I will be reporting back to Tony Blair on the points that have been made here [in Kilinochchi] - and the points that have been made in Colombo as well."

Sri Lanka's conflict can be solved if there is genuine will on both sides, he said.

"There is a huge comparison between Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka," he reiterated.

The numbers of people killed in the two conflicts are proportionately the same - out of a million and a half people in, 3,000 died and sixty thousand have died in Sri Lanka, he said.

"There were cases of discrimination and real conflict in Northern Ireland [also]," Mr. Murphy,

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NEWS

Violence in the NorthEast, week ending November 26

Summary of incidents - apart from major clashes - since November 20

November 26

- Unidentified gunmen shot and killed a retired Grama Sevaka officer, Ganeshapillai Shanmuganathan, 64, on College Road in Point Pedro. Mr. Shanmuganathan was a translator fluent in three languages.
- Armed persons riding in a van shot and killed three Tamil youths at Palaiyootu, a suburb in Trincomalee town at two separate locations. Two of the victims, Vinojan Ramesh and Viji, had been working in a cement factory located in Chinabay Police division and were gunned down as they were returning home. The third youth was identified as Ramesh.
- Armed men in an unmarked white van sprayed bullets at a house on Navalar street in Navanthurai, Jaffna, killing two brothers on the spot while seriously injuring the twin sister of one of the brothers. Mariyathas Jude, 32, and Mariyathas Julias, 30, were killed, while Maiyathas Jasmine, 32, was rushed to hospital. The siblings, originally from Allaipiddy in the Jaffna islet of Kayts, where 8 persons were massacred on August 17, allegedly by members of the paramilitary EPDP along with Kayts SLN cadres, had fled to Navanthurai in Jaffna in fear of the killers. The killings may be connected to the refusal by the siblings to comply with the wishes of a Tamil minister to resettle them back in Allaipiddy, Navanthurai residents speculated.

November 25

- Two Kfir bombers bombed an area southeast of Kilinochchi in an intensified bombardment that continued for the fifth day as the town began to observe 3-day remembrance events, ahead of Heroes Day (Nov 27).

- Two Sri Lanka Police constables were injured, one seriously, when assailants triggered a claymore mine targeted at their road patrol in Poovarasankulam, Vavuniya.
- An offensive launched by STF troopers from Kanchirankuda and Sangamankandy camps in Amparai district met with stiff resistance from the LTTE and was pushed back (see separate story).

November 24

- Armed men on a motorcycle shot dead a young man at Amman Temple road in Kalmunai, Amparai as he was returning on his bicycle after buying provisions. The body of Pillayanthamby Jeevakanthan, 26 of Division C on Amman Temple road in Kalmunai was taken to Kalmunai base hospital for inquest. The armed men, who had followed Jeevakanthan and shot him dead on the spot, escaped.
- Two armed youths on a motorcycle lobbed a hand grenade at three policemen standing guard at the main entrance of the Assistant Superintendent of Police office in Kalmunai town. The policemen escaped with injuries. The youths escaped unhurt though they were fired upon by the police.
- The SLA handed over 5 bullet-riddled bodies and one damaged by a grenade to police in Vavuniya, claiming that the youths were killed when SLA troopers retaliated to gunfire Thursday night.

The sixth youth had killed himself Friday early morning by detonating a hand grenade according to the SLA, which claimed the youths were LTTE cadres waiting to penetrate into SLA area. The youths had a T-56 ass-

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Sinhala nationalists, carrying an effigy of UN Special Advisor Allan Rock, protested opposite the UN headquarters in Colombo on Nov 21. Photo Dinuka Liyanawatte/ Daily Mirror.

UN envoy vilified for saying military recruits children

AS Sri Lanka's government angrily rejected findings by a UN envoy that troops are forcibly conscripting Tamil children for their paramilitary allies fighting against the Tamil Tigers, international ceasefire monitors said they also had evidence of the practice.

The special advisor to the UN Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Allan Rock, told reporters in Colombo Tuesday (Nov 14) that he had evidence of direct involvement of Sri Lanka troops in forcibly enlisting children for the paramilitary Karuna Group.

Not only does Mr. Rock's findings implicate the Sri Lankan armed forces in the forcible conscription of children for combat, they also reinforce accusations that the military is supporting anti-LTTE paramilitaries.

The LTTE has long protested that despite the 2002 truce, Sri Lanka's military has been waging a murderous campaign against Tiger supporters and cadres using paramilitary groups like the Karuna Group, led by a renegade LTTE commander.

"Sri Lankan security forces rounded up children to be recruited by the Karuna faction," Mr. Rock said at the end of a 10-day mission to study the situation of children in the embattled island.

"We encountered both direct and indirect evidence of... [troops'] complicity and participation," Mr. Rock further said, adding there was both eyewitness and anecdotal evidence to back up his claims.

Mr Rock said he had evidence that security forces travel to vilages and photograph Tamil children who are later forcibly recruited by the Karuna Group. Children as young as 13 or 14

have been taken.

And amid indignant denials by the government, the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), which is tasked with overseeing the fragile 2002 truce, said it endorsed Mr. Rock's findings.

Mr. Rock's comments triggered a surge of Sinhala nationalist outrage.

Demonstrators led by hardline Buddhist monks demonstrated outside the UN office in Colombo on Monday (Nov 20), shouting slogans and waving placards that questioned the motives of both Rock and the UN.

The Sri Lankan government

International monitors say they also have evidence of military complicity in teens' forced conscription for paramilitaries.

accused Mr. Rock of being a Tamil Tiger sympathizer.

"He [Rock] has attended a LTTE fund raising event in Canada," Keheliya Rambukwella, minister of Policy Planning and the government defense spokesman, told reporters.

"A responsible member of the international community would not have made such unfounded public statements in such an irresponsible manner," said Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera.

"Even if they were true, a person of that nature should have had the decency to bring it to the notice of the government discreetly."

However the SLMM said it

would soon be providing its own evidence to support Mr. Rock.

"We have known for some time that there is a level of cooperation between certain elements of the security forces and the Karuna faction," Acting SLMM Spokesperson, Helen Olafsdottir said.

"The statement made by the UN official is correct and the SLMM in its second Geneva report released in August also stressed that we had sufficient evidence to prove that the government forces were involved in child recruitment," she said.

"We are compiling more information and will present the government with a comprehensive report on the matter."

In its report to the second round of talks in Geneva in October, the SLMM said that child recruitment and child abduction continued on a relatively high level from June to August but unlike earlier months, the majority of the cases reported were not against the LTTE, but against the Karuna group.

The SLMM said there were a number of indications that Sri Lanka's government was actively supporting the Karuna group.

"Known Karuna supporters have been seen moving to and from SLA camps, and it is evident that the security forces and police in some areas are not taking action to prevent armed elements from operating," the SLMM report said.

Latest reports compiled by the SLMM too said that abductions were continuing in Batticaloa.

"Numbers are bound to be much higher as parents of abductees have been threatened by the perpetrators not to report to police or international organizations," the SLMM said.

EPDP - Eelam People's Democratic Party
 FDL - Forward Defence Line
 IDP - Internally Displaced Person
 HRC - Human Rights Commission
 HSZ - High Security Zone
 ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross
 LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
 PLOTE - People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam
 SLA - Sri Lanka Army
 SLAF - Sri Lanka Air Force
 SLHRC - Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission
 SLMM - Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission
 SLN - Sri Lanka Navy
 STF - Special Task Force

NEWS

Troops massacred students - SLMM

INTERNATIONAL truce monitors said last week Sri Lankan troops entered a school and opened fire on a group of students at close range on Nov. 18, killing five of them, after a deadly Tamil Tiger ambush nearby on government forces.

The students were shot dead in an Agriculture school in Vavuniya shortly after a Tamil Tiger blast killed five soldiers in the area.

"These soldiers fired indiscriminately at a group of students who had thrown themselves on the ground seeking safety after an LTTE (Tamil Tiger) claymore mine blast nearby," Helen

Olafsdottir, spokeswoman for the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission that oversees the 2002 ceasefire, told Reuters.

"Witnesses say that soldiers jumped over the fence, into the agricultural school premises, and opened fire," she added. "They shot from close range, five of the students were killed and at least 10 others were injured."

A Sri Lankan military spokesman said ground troops claimed the civilians were killed in crossfire after the blast which killed five soldiers and that police were investigating.

The Tamil National Alliance (TNA), a coalition of Sri Lanka's

main Tamil parties, condemned the massacre, pointing that 99% of Sri Lankan troops are Sinhalese and hostile to the Tamil population.

"This is yet another crime in a very long list of such crimes that have deliberately and systematically targeted innocent Tamil civilians. These are war crimes of the most serious nature," the TNA said in a press release.

Vavuniya Magistrate S Illancheliyan who visited the scene has ordered the Army to surrender the weapons used by the soldiers involved for inspection by the government analyst.

The TNA press release

described the massacre in detail:

"On 18 November 2006, at about 10.30 am, the Army personnel had approached the premises of the Agriculture Farm School in Thandikulam, Vavuniya from several fronts firing in the air with live ammunition.

"Several students dressed in uniform were engaged in practicals at the time. On hearing the firing the students had taken cover by lying flat on the ground.

"On entering the school premises, members of the Army had ordered the students to stand.

"At this point, one student Ramachandran Atchuthan, had stood up and explained that all

those present were students of the said school and had no connection whatsoever to an earlier claymore mine attack that had been carried out on a Army vehicle.

"At this stage the Army personnel shot Atchuthan in the head at point blank range.

"Subsequently three other students, Gopinath of Trincomalee, Rizwan Mohammed of Batticaloa and Sinthujan of Vavuniya were also shot in execution style killings.

"The Army personnel then proceeded to open fire randomly at the remaining students, grievously wounding ten students of whom six were girls."

Violence / Nov 26

Continued from page 10

ault rifle, a hand grenade, 45,000 rupees of money, fuel and biscuits in their possession, the SLA said handing over the bodies to Chettikulam police.

● The bodies of three SLA soldiers killed in a claymore attack in Kalmadu area, Vavuniya, were taken to the Anuradhapura Military Hospital.

● The mutilated body of a youth, estimated to be around 30 years old, was recovered from an unused well in Karamparan area in Kayts. Police recovered the body after residents complained of the stench.

November 23

● Heavy fighting broke out between the SLA and the LTTE at the southern border of Vaharai region in Batticaloa district as SLA troopers from Kajuwatte and Mankerni camps launched a ground movement backed by heavy mortar, artillery and Multi-Barrel Rocket fire, into the LTTE territory.

LTTE Military Spokesman Irasiah Ilanthirayan said the tank offensive by the SLA beyond the no-go zone into LTTE territory was repulsed by the Tigers.

● SLAF bombers intensified bombing of LTTE controlled areas for the third day on Thursday. 2 Kfir jets dropped bombs near a civilian settlement in Oddusuddan and on Mullaithivu. On Wednesday, Kfirs attacked Vidaththivu coastal area in an LTTE controlled area of Mannar. Jets also attacked a suburb of Mullaithivu on Tuesday.

● Two paramilitary Karuna Group cadres were seriously injured in an internal fight ending in an exchange of gunfire at Vinayapuram in Valaichenai. Some Karuna Group cadres have been hiding due to differences of opinion within the group, and their opponents who had come in search of them started the firefight.

● A student was killed and five wounded when artillery shells fired by counter-insurgency STF troopers hit the 38th Colony in

Batticaloa (see separate story).

● Unidentified men abducted a student of Colombo Technical College in Mattakuliya. Thambirajah Kamalanath, 21, of Thambiluvil, Thirukovil in Amparai district, was abducted according to a complaint lodged with Modara police and the Civil Monitoring Committee in Colombo.

● S. Rubesh, the President of the Periyaneelavanai Sri Vishnu Kovil Trustee Board from Maruthamunai in Amparai, was shot dead by gunmen at his home. Two men on a motorbike went to his house, called him out by name, shot him dead at point blank range, and escaped.

● Gunmen opened fire on a team of Sinhala home guards and policemen at Bakkiella, Amparai, killing three policemen and a home guard and injuring two policemen and three home guards.

● Three Sinhala homeguards were killed and five were injured when gunmen opened fire at their group at Atambagaskada in Anuradhapura.

November 22

● A body, believed to be that of a Tamil youth, was found buried near a desolated house in Nanthavil, Jaffna. Chunnakam Police obtained legal permission to exhume the remains after receiving a tip. The remains of youth, believed to have been buried three months earlier, were taken to Jaffna Teaching Hospital for further medical examinations.

● Five masked gunmen forced their way into the house of a Tamil youth, P. Jeyapragash, 23, in Thetkilupaikulam, Vavuniya, and shot him dead before escaping. Jeyapragash's uncle who witnessed the killing, said the gunmen spoke fluent Tamil.

● Armed men on a motorbike shot dead two Tamil civilians as they were riding their motorbike to work in a cement factory located in the China Bay police division. Saimonthambi Sahayarajah, 47 and Ponnuthurai Ramathas 24 were riding along the rail track in Palaiyootu village when they



Vavuniya streets deserted during a protest over massacre of Tamil students on Nov. 18. Photo TamilNet

were gunned down.

● A group of armed men ambushed SLA troops at Vathiri in Vadamaradchi in an exchange of fire that lasted nearly five minutes. The armed group escaped from the site unhurt.

● The SLA banned all vehicles entering Trincomalee town, saying the move was a security rehearsal and that people could walk into the town to attend their affairs.

November 21

● A paramilitary Karuna Group operative, identifying himself as Gunanan, operating from the office of the group located in SLA controlled Batticaloa town, has issued death threats to Tamil parliamentarians from the East, the TNA said in a letter to the Speaker of the Sri Lankan Parliament. If the 8 parliamentarians from Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Amparai, did not resign their posts before November 27, they would be assassinated, the group warned. 4 key members of the TNA, 2 MPs, an ex-MP and a to-be-nominated MP, have been assassinated during the past 2 years.

● Unidentified persons triggered a claymore mine at Gnaniyar Valavu in Thenmaradchi, killing one SLA trooper and injuring three of a road patrol unit on its way to Apoothy SLA camp from the 52nd SLA Division. The claymore was attached to a bicycle left along the road on the deserted boundary area between Vadamaradchi and Thenmaradchi of the Jaffna peninsula.

● SLAF Kfir bombers bombed the suburbs of Kilinochchi and a jungle area in the district. Students and children fled school premises as the bombers flew at a lower altitude and the impact of the explosions was felt in the buildings in the town. No casualties were reported.

November 20

● One of three youths abducted by armed men in a white van in Kulamangal, Mallakam in Jaffna district Sunday, was released by the abductors in front of his home with severe bruises. Singarasa Julie, 24, was abducted from his home by more than eight armed men who forced their way in.

● Sivaratnam Narendran, 37, of Kokuvil, was forcefully taken from his home by SLA troopers, according to a complaint filed by

his wife at the Jaffna offices of the SLHRC.

● Attackers triggered a claymore mine targeting an SLA vehicle convoy near Puraporruki, Vadamaradchi, injuring six soldiers and one civilian seriously. Additional SLA troopers taken to the site cordoned off a large area surrounding Puraporruki and conducted a house to house search. Residents said the soldiers assaulted passengers entering Vadamaradchi at the Vallai checkpoint.

● SLAF Kfir bombers were observed over the suburbs of Kilinochchi. At least 2 Kfirs were observed over Kilinochchi for 15 minutes, but there were no reports of aerial bombardment. A medical facility built with the help of the Asian Development Bank, was later bombed in Pooneryn.

● Theeparanjan Dias, 27, a father of one and a resident of Ward No 7 in Pesalai, Mannar, has been reported missing since November 17, according to complaint lodged with the Mannar Regional Office of the SLHRC. Theeparanjan, a trader, had left home to go to Mannar town on Friday, but failed to return home.

Violence up to Nov 20, p12

NEWS

Violence in the NorthEast, week ending November 19

Summary of incidents - apart from major clashes - since November 13

November 19

● Two cadres of the paramilitary EPDP working with soldiers of the Komanthurai SLA camp were shot and injured by gunmen at Thalavai, Eravur, as they were returning from Thalvai on their motorcycle. M. Illamaran, 29, and K. Ramesh, 33, fled leaving their motorcycle behind. The EPDP cadres returned to the Komanthurai SLA camp after being treated at the Eravur District hospital.

● The unidentified body of a male, estimated to be about 45 years old, with gunshot wounds to his head was recovered in Thavasikulam, Vavuniya. Information on receipts found in victim's clothes led police to speculate that the victim is a trader from Manal Aru.

● Uppuveli Police recovered two bodies with gunshot injuries in Allesgarden, a suburb of Trincomalee town. The victims were shot dead elsewhere and their bodies were dumped at Allesgarden. There was speculation that both were from Dankotuwa in the south. Another body recovered in the same area was also not identified.

● In Pattithidal, Muttur, the body of a youth, about 24-years age, was recovered near a cemetery with gunshot injuries.

● Armed men abducted a labourer, Thangarajah Raveendran, 39, a father of two, at Koomankulam, Vavuniya, as he was on his way to work and shot him dead later in at Kandapuram in Vavuniya.

● Sasiharana, 34, of Kondavil West, was abducted from his house by unidentified armed men.

November 18

● Soldiers manning a checkpoint near the Thandikulam Farm School in Vavuniya entered the premises, lined up the uniformed hostel students who were engaged in practicals and shot at them, killing five students and wounding eight (see box story).

● A third year student at the Arts faculty of Jaffna Campus was abducted by SLN soldiers in Vangalavadi, Velanai. Markandu Sasikumar, 22, from Nedunthivu West, had gone to the Vangalavadi information centre run by the SLN to obtain permission to travel to Colombo. Sasikumar was taken in a white van by the SLN troopers, according to a complaint filed at the SLHRC.

● Two SLN Inshore Patrol Crafts

were sunk and a third IPC vessel was damaged in a sea battle that broke out in the seas off LTTE controlled Vidathalthivu, north of Mannar. Separately, civilians were fleeing Talaimannar as the battle raged off Talaimannar.

A guard unit for the naval exercise of the Sea Tigers retaliated when attacked by the SLN vessels that entered the LTTE territorial waters in Vidathalthivu, said LTTE military spokesman Mr. Irasiah Ilanthirayan. Sri Lanka Air Force MI-24 helicopters, MIG and Kfir bombers were engaged in the offensive launched by the Sri Lankan military, he added. The battle raged off the seas from LTTE controlled Vidathalthivu to SLN positions off Talaimannar.

A SLN gunboat was sunk by the Tigers in the seas off Vidathalthivu. Another gunboat was sunk later when additional SLN vessels approached the scene. In the continuing battle, a third Sri Lankan vessel was damaged and towed back. The LTTE said the SLN vessels were chased into Mannar by the Sea Tiger guard unit and the naval exercise of the Tigers was continuing in Vidathalthivu. Around 10 SLN troopers were killed in the clashes, the LTTE said. 3 Sea Tiger cadres were wounded.

● The SLA and LTTE exchanged mortar fire in Vavunathivu, Kommathurai and Black Bridge, in the Batticaloa district. Four SLA soldiers were wounded and admitted to hospital and a dead body was handed over to Valaichenai hospital by the SLA. 2 SLA soldiers, wounded in Kommathurai when the parties exchanged mortar fire were identified as V.P. Tissakumara Marasinghe, 32, and Wattalawatte Jeyaratne, 35. In Vavunathivu, the wounded soldiers were identified as T.M. Premasiri, 31, and K.M. Susantha Ranjith, 27.

● A youth abducted by the SLA managed to escape and surrendered to the SLHRC (see box).

● The body of Murugesu Tharmaseelan, 26, from Atchelu in Neervely Jaffna was found in the Milkboard Village in Thirunelveli Jaffna. Tharmaseelan was taken away from home in Atchelu by SLA soldiers Friday evening.

● The body of Nagesi Vinathan, 22, who was abducted Friday by SLA troop, was found near Kopay Heroes cemetery with slashes.

Continued on page 13



The body of one of dozens of Tamil people murdered in the Northeast is carried away. Photo TamilNet

Dozens of youths seek safety with Human Rights Council

JAFFNA youths threatened by the Sri Lanka Army SLA and allied paramilitary cadres are increasingly seeking security in the protective custody of Jaffna prison through the office of the Human Rights Commission.

At least 24 youths have sought protection with the Jaffna HRC over the past 10 days, fearing their lives are in danger from SLA and collaborating paramilitaries.

Those seeking protective custody arrive at the HRC Jaffna office with their parents and relatives. They are mostly from the villages of Thirunelveli, Koku-vil, Kondavil and Inuvil.

"The majority of the cases of abducted and killed in recent times are from these villages," Thirunelveli residents said.

4 youths from the Kondavil

area surrendered to the HRC on Wednesday (Nov 22).

Earlier six more youths from the Kondavil area surrendered Tuesday (Nov 21), and another four youths surrendered on Monday (Nov 20).

These 14 youths appeared at the Jaffna Magistrates courts Wednesday before being taken to Jaffna prison for protective custody on the orders of the Jaffna Magistrate.

But with Army and Police personnel assigned responsibility for the security of the Jaffna prison, the danger to the lives of the surrendered youths still remains even inside the facility, rights activists in Jaffna said.

With the additional 8 youths in kept in protective custody earlier, 24 youths are currently held in the prison, HRC officials and parents of some of the

youths said.

Placing those below 18 years of age in protective custody of Jaffna prison may cause legal complications and many local civil society organisations have requested the Jaffna office of UNICEF, to make urgent arrangements to safeguard the lives of those below 18 threatened by the SLA and paramilitary groups.

"Most of the youths abducted and killed by the SLA are between the ages of 15 to 18, and the Organisations working to safeguard the welfare of children, including UNICEF in Jaffna, are yet to raise alarm," civil society leaders said.

There needs to be awareness of the escalating incidents of abductions and the fear and trauma of parents with teen age children in Jaffna, they said.

Youth escapes hail of bullets

A YOUTH abducted by Sri Lankan troops at gun point from his house at Sebastian Lane, Kondavil East, Jaffna sought sanctuary Friday Nov 17 at the Jaffna office of the SLHRC, after surviving their efforts to shoot him.

Abducted on Nov 11 along with two other youths, Thambyaiyah Jegan 26, a bachelor and a painter, escaped from an SLA vehicle and went into hiding for week before surrendering to the HRC officials for safety.

In a statement to the HRC, Jegan said that he and two other youths were abducted by the SLA troopers of the Urelu SLA camp and were tortured at the camp premises for alleged links to the Liberation Tigers.

Later the three were taken in a Buffel armoured car to Anaipanthy, where soldiers opened fire at them.

Jegan had managed to escape amid a hail of gunfire while the other two were shot dead by the troopers, Jegan said in his statement.

During his arrest, armed soldiers had assaulted Jegan's mother when she had tried to stop the soldiers from taking her son.

Jegan was forced to get inside the Buffel armoured vehicle waiting in front of his house, and he saw two neighborhood youths, Ravi Rajivan, 14, and Thankaroopan Jeeva, 21, already held captive inside the vehicle.

The three abducted youths

were severely tortured by the SLA troopers at the Urelu SLA camp and then taken to Anaipanthy where the SLA troopers pushed Ravi Rajivan to the ground and shot him with a pistol.

When Jegan was pushed to the ground he managed to free himself and fled the area narrowly escaping several rounds of fire aimed at him.

He took refuge inside a house and went underground till Friday, Jegan said in his statement.

He learnt later that the bodies of other two youths were found near Anaipanthy junction Sunday, where two SLA Intelligence Officers were killed in claymore attack on Thursday November 9.

NEWS



Tamil residents queue up to buy food and other essentials in the Jaffna peninsula. The Sri Lankan government's closure of the main land access route in mid August has led to virtual siege conditions for 600,000 people there. Photo Lakruwan Wanniarachchi/AFP/Getty Images

Viral fever sweeps Jaffna, NE

VIRAL fever, suspected to be Chikungunya, is spreading rapidly amongst people in Jaffna, medical experts said Sunday.

"In Jaffna, this viral fever which has the symptoms of Chikungunya is spreading very fast. I find that more than 5,000 people have been infected," Dr. A. Ketheeswaran, director of provincial health services there, told Reuters.

The disease has been confirmed spreading rapidly in Kalmunai, Mannar, Batticaloa, Puttalam and parts of Colombo.

Food and medical supplies are in short supply in the northern peninsula, which remains cut off with the government refusing to open the A9 highway which it closed during heavy fighting in August.

Jaffna residents told Reuters

More than 5,000 people have been infected in Jaffna. Doctors recommend paracetamol - but shops have run out.

doctors had recommended paracetamol as a fever preventive, but most shops had run out.

An epidemic of the mosquito-borne Chikungunya viral fever has been confirmed elsewhere in the island, a top health official told Reuters Saturday.

Dr. Nihal Abeyesinghe, director of the state Epidemiology Department, said pockets of the fever had been detected in Sri Lanka's northwest, south and east, but could not say how many cases had been reported.

"We have got some samples down to Colombo and we handed them over to five different laboratories. All five have reported it as Chikungunya," he said. "You could say it is (an epidemic)."

"We have confirmed there is an outbreak going on in Kalmunai, Mannar, Batticaloa, Puttalam and some parts of Colombo city," he added. "It is in densely populated pockets."

Abeyesinghe said he believed up to 60 percent of reported fever cases were due to Chikungunya.

"There are several different

Violent incidents week ending Nov 19

Continued from page 12

November 17

● Armed men abducted a family man from his home and shot him. The gunmen are alleged to be part of the paramilitary Karuna Group. A. Thayaparan, 20, a firewood cutter and father of two, was abducted from his residence on Kapunur Road at Vinayagapuram, Thambiluvil Thursday night and left wounded near the local Samurdhi office. He was taken to hospital the next morning but succumbed to his injuries.

● Thevarasa Manoraj, 29, a father of one, was living in Thunnalai when he was killed by gunmen while he was riding his bicycle near Samian Arasady junction in Karaveddy, Vadamardchy.

● Unidentified armed men killed Thangarasa Thanenthiran, 26, near Atchuvvely junction.

● Mathavan Subramaniam, 50, a civilian from Palay Road in Kayts surrendered at the Jaffna SLHRC stating that he was shot and injured inside his house by three armed youths from the EPDP.

November 16

● SLA troopers shot dead a civilian during a cordon and search operation at Theevupitty in Sooriyakaddaikaadu village, Mannar, following a grenade attack on SLA troopers which seriously injured a SLA captain. Muthuraj Selvaraj, 36, resident of Theevupitty and a father of two, was he man shot.

● Unidentified gunmen opened fire on the car of the Dean of the Faculty of Arabic, of Southeastern University at Oluvil near Kaliyodai Bridge in Akaraipattu, seriously injuring the driver, S. Saleem, 41. The Dean, M. M. S. Jalaldeen, was on his way to the uni-

versity from his home in Maruthamunai, and escaped without any injuries.

Samanthurai police investigating into the shooting said they suspect personal conflicts in the university to be the reason but are yet to find the true motive. Conflicts and problems had been rife at Southeastern University due to competition for the high positions in the university. Unidentified persons had set fire to the university administration building last month burning all the documents kept in it.

● Unidentified persons triggered a claymore device killing one civilian and seriously injuring five others at Sathirachanthy near K.K.S Road-Powerhouse road junction in the heart of Jaffna town. The dead man was identified as Kanapathy Viswanathan, 74, of Velani West. The SLA said that one of their vehicles had been the target of the bomb. A destroyed SLA pick-up was found at the site. The SLA and the police conducted an intensive cordon off and search around the area for more than three hours but no one was arrested.

November 15

● An employee from Halo Trust, an International Non Governmental Organization involved in de-mining in Jaffna, was forcibly abducted by unidentified gunmen from his home at Old Park Road, Chundikkuli in Jaffna town. Ten armed men in a white van broke

open the house of Charles Huston Ravindran, 30, and abducted him at gunpoint. More than eight employees from Halo Trust have been abducted or disappeared in the Jaffna district. Some of the employees left the NGO and went underground fearing abduction by the SLA or allied paramilitaries.

It is alleged that administrative officials of Halo Trust have not publicized the threat to its employees, nor vigorously pursued the SLA or other law enforcement authorities to locate the whereabouts of those missing.

● A constable was injured when a group of unidentified persons attacked the police check post at Kattukaraikulam in Murunkan, Mannar. The Police claimed that a group of five LTTE cadres had fired at the check point and fled when they retaliated.

November 14

● The bodies of Muthulingam Sathiyaseelan, 25, from Arali Road, Puthiyakudiyiruppu in Ottumadam, and Kunapalasingam Sureshkumar, 28, from Manipay Road in the same area of Ottumadam were found with gunshot wounds along KKS Road near Nachimar Kovilady in Chunnakam. Ottumadam residents said the youths were abducted late Monday from their homes by armed men in a white van, and were shot dead midnight Monday.

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FDL - Forward Defence Line
IDP - Internally Displaced Person
HRC - Human Rights Commission
HSZ - High Security Zone
ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross
LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
PLOTE - People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam
SLA - Sri Lanka Army
SLAF - Sri Lanka Air Force
SLHRC - Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission
SLMM - Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission
SLN - Sri Lanka Navy
STF - Special Task Force

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NEWS

STF offensives in the East

TWO artillery-backed offensives by Sri Lanka's elite Special Task Force (STF) against the Liberation Tigers in the Batticaloa and Amparai districts of the last week were repulsed after major clashes.

On Saturday (Nov 25) STF troop from Kanchirankuda and Sangamankandy camps in Amparai district launched a penetration raid towards Thangaveluathapuram in LTTE controlled part of the district.

Following stiff resistance put up by a guerrilla unit of the Tigers, the STF pulled back, local LTTE political official, Mr. Veeramani said.

Two LTTE fighters and four STF personnel were killed in the fighting, he said.

The LTTE cadres were named as Ilakkiyan, 24, a Sea Tiger and Jayaprakash, 21.

The STF however said four Tigers had been killed for no STF losses. It said troops seized two T-56 automatic rifles, a pistol and a walkie-talkie when they advanced into LTTE area and launched an ambush on a LTTE position.

Residents said ambulances were observed carrying STF casualties towards Amparai town.

After pulling back, the STF also launched a mortar attack on LTTE Heroes Cemetery in Kanchchikudicha Aru.

A civilian was killed when the STF continued with heavy mortar fire towards Thangaveluathapuram. Residents fled the village following the STF shelling.

Sixteen years ago, on 23 July 1990, the SLA chased away more than a thousand Tamil families from the Tamil villages of Thangaveluathapuram, Sagamam, Kanchchikudicha Aru and Alikambai. After struggling in camps in Thirukkivil for nine years, the families returned in 1999.

On Thursday (Nov 23), seven STF troops were killed when the Tigers counter-attacked their unit which launched a ground movement towards the 38th Colony in Vellaveli, Batticaloa.

One LTTE cadre, Nathan, was also killed.

A 40 mm grenade launcher and a T-56 rifle were recovered after the battle by the Tigers.

The STF had advanced with heavy artillery and mortar fire support that claimed the life of a 15-year-old female student and wounded 5 civilians including her 2 sisters and a brother.

Kamalaharan Arulchelvi, 15 was killed when STF shells hit her house in Thikkodai, Vellaveli. Her siblings, Kamalaharan Nirusha, 07, Kamalaharan Kalaichelvi, 20, and Kamalaharan Arulrasa, 18, were wounded and were rushed to hospital.

Two other women, Thangarasa Chandra, 38, and Kanapathipillai Pakyam, 65, were also wounded.

The victims had displaced from 39th Colony, inside LTTE territory, three months ago due to heavy shelling from the Sri Lankan military camps.

The STF, a specially trained and equipped unit of commandos drawn from the Sri Lankan Police, was initially developed and deployed for counter insurgency operations in the eastern province in the 1980s.

The growth of the LTTE's conventional military capabilities had impelled the STF during the Eelam War III to look beyond standard western counter insurgency doctrine and practice, with operational tasks in controlling government held areas in Amparai and Batticaloa districts, reports say.

No choice, p1,p3



Displaced people in Vaharai with a child wounded in Army shelling of a refugee camp on Nov 8.

Violence ending Nov 19

Continued from page 13

● The body of Sasi, 30, from Avarangal Valigamam East, was found near his home. SLA soliders had earlier visited the area looking for the victim, who the locals said the SLA suspected of complicity in claymore attacks near his home.

● The burnt body of Saravanapavanathan Hariharan, 24, an employee at the private airline operator Aero Lanka, who was abducted by armed men in a white van from Chunnakam junction Sunday, was recovered near Paranchothi Vidyalayam in Kondavil.

● Unidentified armed men abducted four students from Vipulanthapuram, Mylambavely and another youth from Savukkady, Thalvai in Eravur while they were unloading stones for road works. Parents of the abducted youths lodged complaints at Eravur Police and with the ICRC.

Thayaparan Alphons, 14, Arulantham Mathan, 16, Thambirasa Sugumar, 16, and Santhiran Pirasath, 18, who are studying for their G.C.E. O/L, work as labourers to supplement the income of their parents. All are from families living below the poverty line. A fifth youth, a friend who had visited the site in a bicycle to talk, was also abducted. Unidentified gunmen had come in a van to the site where the students were repairing a road destroyed by December 2004's tsunami.

● A SLA soldier was injured when two unidentified persons on a motorbike threw a hand grenade at a group of soldiers on guard duty at Uma Mill junction, Kommathura, in Eravur. The injured trooper, Soosai Ariyathasa, 35, was one of a group of soldiers stationed along the Batticaloa-Polannaruwa road to provide protection for the military convey that brings soldiers returning from leave. SLA soldiers fired indiscriminately following the attack, conducted a search operation and beat civilian passers by. Though local residents said the SLA soldiers arrested five youths, the SLA neither confirmed the arrests, nor handed over anybody

to the Police.

● Unidentified persons triggered a claymore device on the Jaffna-Pt. Pedro road at Sirupitty in Valligamam east, killing a SLA trooper on the spot and seriously injuring another of the SLA road patrol unit. Following the attack, SLA troopers ordered hundreds of passengers out of their vehicles as they passed the site of attack and assaulted them indiscriminately. Glass windows on the vehicles were also smashed by the infuriated SLA troopers. School children, teachers, government officials and others on their way to work in the morning were the people beaten by the SLA troopers. Kopay Teachers' Training College vehicle, Public Transport buses and private vehicles were damaged. All the passengers and passers by were held by the SLA troopers for more than an hour while the surroundings of the area was cordoned off and searched.

● Unidentified persons detonated a claymore mine killing three SLA troops at Mathottam in Uylankulam Murungan, Mannar.

● Sri Lankan troops moved into LTTE controlled Vakarai region, beyond the no-mans zone, amid heavy artillery shelling. Civilians fled Maruthankulam and Kirimichchai villages where SLA troops camped at the schools.

November 13

● Six bodies, believed to have been killed during Thursday's (Nov 9) clashes in the seas off Point Pedro, were discovered floating along the coast. Four were found in the area between Supparamadam and Inparuddy and another two washed ashore in Valvettithurai near Sivaguru Maha Vidyalayam. Five of the bodies have been accepted by SLN and the unidentified sixth body is believed to be that of a LTTE Sea Tiger cadre.

● An unidentified burnt body of a youth was recovered near Urumpirai junction. Sounds of gunfire were heard from Sunday around midnight from the place where the dead body was found.

● The body of a youth with gun-

shot wounds was found near the Jaffna Hindu College playground.

● A mother from Kondavil area registered complaints with the SLHRC in Jaffna that her son Thambyaiah Jegan, 26, was abducted by persons in a white van and that her two younger school going sons, aged 14 and 17 had escaped and fled from the abductors. She said she can identify the abductors who are from Atchelu SLA camp and that they told her policemen were taking her son to Kopay police station.

Abductions by 'White Van' squad and Field bike Units of the SLA and collaborating paramilitaries have escalated at an alarming rate, according to Jaffna residents and SLHRC officials.

● The body of Selvam Ravichandran, 25, of Sithandy Murugan Temple Road, with hands bound and gun shot wounds was recovered in Sithandy. Bullet wounds in the head of the father of one indicated that he had been shot with a T-56 gun. Ravichandran had been abducted by armed men on Friday at Chenkalady, where he had gone to arrange his travel abroad, relatives said.

● Armed men attacked Murakodanchennai SLA camp with gun and mortar fire, seriously injuring three SLA troopers, T. M. S. Anurakumara, 30, W. G. R. Upasena, 25 and R. T. A. Piyasena, 26. SLA troopers opened fire but the attackers escaped unhurt.

● Armed men in a white van abducted three youths in Chunnakam, Jaffna. Relatives of the abducted say the SLA, operating from the Atchelu Army camp, is responsible for the abductions. Chelliah Kumarasooriar, 30, a day labourer from Ikkiran, Kantharodai in Chunnakam was abducted early in the morning by men who assaulted his wife and children before driving off with him. Saravanapavanathan Hariharan, 24, an employee at the private airline operator Aero Lanka, was abducted by armed men near Chunnakam junction. Balasundarampillai Kamalraj, 23, a day labourer, was abducted from his residence in Kantharodai Road, Chunnakam.

Fever in Jaffna, NE

Continued from page 13

fevers. Not all fevers reported are Chikungunya," he said, but added that bird flu was "very, very unlikely because there are no respiratory symptoms, no cough or cold or anything like that".

However laboratories had yet to confirm whether an outbreak of viral fever in the northern Jaffna peninsula, cut off from the rest of the country for months was Chikungunya as suspected.

The outbreak comes as Sri Lanka also grapples with a sharp increase in dengue fever cases as monsoon rains create breeding conditions for mosquitoes which carry the diseases, Reuters said.

Symptoms of Chikungunya include high fever, joint and muscular pain, severe headaches, body aches and a rash similar to

that seen in dengue patients. While the disease is painful, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says no deaths from Chikungunya have been documented in scientific literature.

Abeyasinghe said it was very unlikely that Chikungunya caused the death on the peninsula of a Tamil woman suffering from viral fever on Friday.

"It is very unlikely to be (due to Chikungunya). There may be a lot of other disease conditions associated with these people who are reported to have died due to Chikungunya," he said.

Chikungunya, Swahili for "that which bends up", was first isolated in the blood of a febrile patient in Tanzania in 1953, the CDC said.

NEWS

More jets, more gunboats, more ammunition...

Continued from page 8

nuclear powers the U.S., France and Pakistan, along with Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and several Southeast Asian nations.

"Sri Lanka is straddled with a terrorist issue and a lot of assistance is required from neighboring countries, not only India and Pakistan but also in the region," AP quoted Perera as saying.

Sri Lanka's government plans to use a budgeted 28 percent increase in defence spending for 2007 to help beef up the military, Reuters reported.

The budget raises defence spending to Rs139.56 billion in 2007 from a revised Rs108.67 billion in 2006.

MPs voted 133 in favour to 18 against to pass the budget bill. The latter were all members of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA).

Reuters quoted military sources as saying the navy was likely to look to replace Israeli-made Dvora fast attack boats sunk in recent naval battles with the Tamil Tigers, as well as buying more ammunition and weapons systems.

President Mahinda Rajapakse made no mention of defence spending figures in his abridged budget speech to parliament last week. But the budget estimates document shows defence spending will rise to 139.56 billion rupees (\$1.29 bln) in 2007 from a revised 108.67 billion rupees in 2006.

"Right now the requirement of strengthening the air force, navy and defence sector becomes very paramount. National security comes first," said government defence spokesman and cabinet minister Keheliya Rambukwella.

"When the sovereignty of the state is threatened it has to be safeguarded," he said. "Defence professionals will have to look into (what to buy) -- basically what you need to defend the country."

UK envoy in Vanni ...

Continued from page 9

who co-chaired the peace talks there for two years, said.

"No one can win this type of war. Everybody understands that and if there is a will for peace then there are all sorts of ways in which our experiences in Northern Ireland can help," he said.

"Everything has to be on the table, it has to be an inclusive process, everybody has to be involved and there has to be equal respect for everybody," he said.

"[In Northern Ireland] we looked at everything - constitutional arrangements, language, human rights, humanitarian issues, equality, police, criminal

"We already know they are acquiring four more Mig 27 fighters, so similarly there will be other armoured vehicles for the army and ships for the Navy," Iqbal Athas, Sri Lanka's leading defence correspondent and analyst for Jane's Defence Weekly, told Reuters.

"They need some because they have lost some fast attack (naval) craft in battle."

Analysts said the increase in spending was higher than anticipated, expecting the budget deficit to widen due to increased defence expenditure, and wondering where the government will find the money.

"It looks as though they might be planning to upgrade their defence hardware, which means they will have to raise foreign money," Dushyanth Wijayasinghe, head of research at Asia Securities in Colombo told Reuters last month.

"They could do that partly from dollar bond issues and partly from long-term credit lines from (arms) suppliers," he added.

This week Central Bank Governor Ajith Nivard Cabraal told Reuters that Sri Lanka plans to issue its first US dollar bond in 2007 to raise funds for major infrastructure projects such as roads and ports.

Cabraal did not say how much of the money raised from the bond issue would be earmarked for infrastructure projects.

Athas said President Rajapakse's sharp increase in defence spending marked a departure from previous administrations.

"It becomes significant if you look at the past, particularly with the two previous administrations, which sought a de-escalation with the ongoing peace process. All of a sudden we see a diversion from that and an escalation," he said.

"The government is preparing itself militarily. There is a marked shift there."

justice; all those issues were on the table," he said.

"Above all, equal respect for everybody's point of view."

Speaking to reporters, the LTTE Political Chief, Mr. Tamilselvan said the meeting with Mr. Murphy had been interesting.

"The Northern Ireland peace process succeeded because there was patience and commitment by the conflict parties," he said.

"[But] the Sri Lankan government doesn't even want to acknowledge and respecting the Ceasefire Agreement we signed in 2002," he said. "In the [new] budget, the government has massively increased military expenditure. What does that indicate?"

COMMENT

Tamils must unite and act ...

Continued from page 7

do for us, as some of them already have, is to issue meek statements of 'regret' and declare that the LTTE and the Sri Lanka government must find a 'compromise.'

This is just window dressing to pretend they have some concern for our people. They will not lift a finger to avert the human tragedy that is unfolding minute by minute in the Northeast.

They know very well who is to blame for the blockades. But they are not prepared to blame the government for fear of jeopardising their own interests.

We always knew the international community would always look after its own interests. Now we know this is true even when the slightest action on our behalf might risk these interests.

From the outset the Tamil freedom struggle has eagerly sought the support of the international community to confront the tyranny of the Sinhala state. Without success.

Now we face this tyranny again, this time in full view of

the international community - and the world turns its face away.

Last July, when irrigation water to the fields of a small part of the Trincomalee district was cut off, there was outrage and uproar against the LTTE.

And when, in breach of the Ceasefire, the Sri Lankan government launched a military offensive to open the water supply, the world watched approvingly.

Even after the LTTE had agreed to reopen the water supply, Sri Lanka escalated the offensive. Even then the international community did not restrain the government.

Perhaps the international community's logic is that military violence is justified when humanitarian needs are at stake.

Now hundreds of thousands of people are being denied food and medicine by the Sri Lankan government.

Yet there is international silence - or some mild protests and the usual call for 'talks'. Colombo's violence is being endorsed by the world.

The Tamil people are, as

always, very much alone.

We therefore need to find our own way out of this.

We must take responsibility for not only finding a way to end this humanitarian crisis, but to ensure we can never be put into this situation again.

We must set our differences aside for now and unite behind this goal.

When the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) swept the 2004 elections in the Northeast it was on the platform of recognising the LTTE as 'sole representatives' of the Tamil people and on the need for a self-governing interim authority for the Northeast.

That popular mandate - and responsibility of leadership - was given to the LTTE, albeit through the TNA.

The LTTE must now respond to the humanitarian crisis in the Northeast.

Just as it acted decisively after the devastating tsunami of December 2004, the LTTE must take the lead in finding a way forward.

Enough is enough. The well being of our people simply cannot be left in the unwilling hands of others.

Boycott Sri Lanka!

Check that label before you buy!

**Senthuri
Thayamohan**

They are innocuously peppered throughout your house: jeans thrown over your chair, sweatshirts piled on the couch, t-shirts in the laundry. And they are covertly funding the bombings of our Tamil brethren in Northeast Sri Lanka.

Even as our hearts ache and our minds rebel reading the horrifying media reports, we don't realize the way we contribute to the bloodshed.

But the sad reality is that we are funding Sri Lanka's war against our own people when we purchase goods made in Sri Lanka.

One quarter of Sri Lanka's exports is textiles, the second largest industry behind its food and drink business (booming due to its high demand Ceylon teas).

Thus textiles and products for consumption are

the most significant components of Sri Lanka's economy, funding the Sri Lankan state and thereby fuelling the government's war against the Tamil people.

The war has been an ugly one, well-documented by photos from Pesalai, Mavilaru, Vangalai, Allaipitty, Vaharai.

Even in so-called peacetime, schools were bombed and hospitals shelled.

And we, as members of the Tamil diaspora, have felt helpless, as we read about the latest massacres and saw the bodies pile up.

It is time for the Tamil people to stop being helpless.

In Sri Lanka and around the world. We can do something to stop the slaughter. Even simpler than campaigning with our host country's government, we can let our money campaign for us.

We can stop purchasing goods made in Sri Lanka.

All textiles, Ceylon tea, Lemon Puffs, Chocolate Puffs, gems, accounts in Sri Lankan banks.

Part of the profits from these products end up in the government's coffers, which it then uses to purchase jet bombers and weapons to turn against Tamil children at Sencholai and patients in Kilinochchi General Hospital.

So instead of feeling pangs of helpless and sorrow at the plight of our brethren in our homeland, do something.

Starting now, say no to all products made in Sri Lanka. Say no to Sinhala companies sending their profits to the Sri Lankan government. Say no to the Sri Lankan government. Say no to the slaughter of Tamils.

Join the 'Campaign to Boycott Sri Lanka!'

To get involved or learn more about the campaign, please contact:
boycottSriLanka@gmail.com



Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse arrives at the Weerawila air-force camp by helicopter, 19 Nov 2006. Rajapakse laid the foundation stone for a 125-million-dollar, 4,000-metre upgrade to a small airport at Weerawila, which is to become an international terminal by Nov 2009. Photo Sanka Vidanagama/AFP/Getty Images



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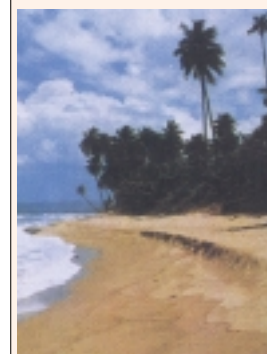


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